

**MINUTES OF THE EAST GREENWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING**

TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2009

HANAFORD SCHOOL CAFETERIA

200 MIDDLE ROAD

EAST GREENWICH, RI 02818

**ANY ITEMS CONSIDERED BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MAY BE
SUBJECT TO A VOTE 7:00p.m. Regular Session**

I. Call to Order

The first April meeting of the East Greenwich School Committee was held on Tuesday, April 7, 2009 at the Hanaford School at 7:00p.m.

Members present: JeanAnn Guliano-Chair, Anne Palumbo-Vice-Chair, Robert Durant, Susan Records, and Deidre Gifford, as well as Superintendent Charles Meyers, Director of Administration, Maryanne Crawford, Director of Special Education, Paula Dillon and Technology Director, Jerry Nettik. Mrs. Martin arrived at 8:35p.m. and Mrs. Winters arrived at 9:25p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

III. Public Comments

Carla Prebe, Sheep Farm Road, spoke about the CPT Program. She noted that this is the only academic program from the 2006 SALT Report stating we should increase staffing. She spoke to teachers

about how Rhode Island will meet the beginning teacher standards. She feels we shouldn't cut programs that serve the highest achievers.

Mrs. Guliano stated that the School Committee is supportive of programs that affect kids. She added that the cuts have not yet been determined. Erin Fazio, Shippeetown Road, stated that there are students in this program who look forward to it. Brian Sullivan, River Farm Drive, spoke about the proposed elimination of middle and some high school sports. He asked for the Committee's support to keep these programs since he feels it is an extension of the classroom. He also noted that kids learn a lot by competition. Mr. Sullivan noted that parents will raise money or go to the Town Council. Mrs. Guliano stated that things like sports benefit the whole child. She also noted that there are no raises in the budget this year for teachers. Mr. Meyers stated that they put together a budget that was fiscally responsible and now they have been asked to reduce by \$600,000. A parent asked about Town reductions and asked if it was equal. He asked how the budget could be reduced if 85% of the budget is contractual. He also noted that his kids pay AAU baseball and use the fields at the high school. He wanted to know why Parks and Recreation don't charge them. Mr. Durant noted that all groups will now be charged. Another parent stated that the sports program is keeping kids busy after school. He asked if it would cost the Town more if these kids are free. Mr. Durant stated that it is all about choices adding that the School Committee went line by line over the course of a month to find dollars. It was noted that the School Committee will go back to the Town Council to see if they can save

on their end. Tim Leyden, Lynn Circle, stated that in 1977 Coventry cut all sports and it affected many people. It took 6 or 7 years to get the housing values back. He noted that Coventry also has an admission for games. Mr. Leyden stated that we live in a great town and if parents leave kids won't want to come back and live in East Greenwich. Ellen Shanos suggested that all of these comments be made to the Town Council at their budget hearing on April 13th. Mr. Durant also suggested speaking to the local legislators about the Governor's budget.

IV. Approval of Minutes-March 17, 2009

Mrs. Palumbo made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Records to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2009 meeting with some changes. Mr. Durant abstained and the motion passed.

Announcements and Recognitions

a. Alex Hayek was recognized for being named the New England High School Wrestling Championship in his weight class.

b. Nick Ross, EGHS, was recognized for winning the All New England Team (2nd place) – two mile-9:11 and All American @ the Nike Indoor Nationals (5th place) – 15:13:13

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c. Jeff Winters, EGHS, was recognized for the following swimming accomplishments: STATE MEET 1st place, 200 freestyle; 1st place, 100 Freestyle; 1st place, 200 freestyle Relay Team; 1st place, 400

Freestyle Relay Team

DIVISION 1 MEET: 1st place, 50 Freestyle; 1st place, 100 Butterfly; 1st place, 200 Freestyle Relay; 2nd place, 400 Freestyle Relay Team

d. Spelling Bee Winners from Archie Cole Middle School who were recognized are: Winner-Eddie Luo and Runner-Up-Marina Palumbo

e. Cole Mathcounts Team was recognized for winning 3rd place in the State's Competition: The following students placed in the State Competition: Eddie Luo, Chris Luo, Bennett Gallo, Andrew Miner and Mary O'Toole

V. Superintendent's Report

a. Graduation Rate

Mr. Meyers stated that the State Department of Education Infoworks Report noted that the 2008 graduation rate was 94%. He would like it to be 100% and will strive to have it be there.

VI. Action Items

a. Appointment

i. Mrs. Palumbo made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Durant to approve the appointment of Robert Coutu, Head Custodian at Meadowbrook Farms School, effective April 1, 2009. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Parental Leave

ii. Mr. Durant made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Palumbo to approve the parental leave of Nina Reiner, Art Teacher at Cole Middle School, from April 9, 2009 until the end of the 2008-2009 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Technology Study Proposal

Mr. Durant made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Records to discuss the technology proposal. Janet Novack from Janova Gateway spoke about the proposal she put together to work with the technology committee and assess the current state of technology. She noted that this originated from a question the School Committee had on how to best spend technology money.

They were concerned about how to deal with the short term issues we have and also looking at next year and beyond. Mr. Nettik stated that some of the data he just collected for RIDE will be used. Mr. Meyers would like to have this study before the new superintendent comes aboard. Mrs. Records stated that this study can be a part of the new superintendent's education. She feels it is an aggressive plan and the first question is what the burn points in technology are. Mr. Meyers feels that is the work of the technology committee. Mrs. Records would like to spend as little money as possible on this study.

Mr. Nettik had meetings with the school media specialists and technology people and they have a lot of data already. Mrs. Gifford stated that we need to do some leg work prior to the technology committee meeting. She also added she has not seen a description of the pre-work and asked if it should be added to the proposal. Mr. Meyers responded that we are in the process of doing this now. Both Mr. Durant and Mrs. Records would like to see the preliminary work. Ms. Novack stated that we need to come up with a five year action plan as to how we are going to support technology and it has to be reviewed every year. She also noted that the State is very concerned that technology is being put into schools and that it is being

integrated into the curriculum properly. Mrs. Gifford asked if this could be broken up and have the short term items done now and long term items in the next few months. She wants answers to questions and doesn't want to purchase any new technology for the district until we know what works. Mrs. Gifford would like to make sure all concerns are going to be addressed in the next proposal and make sure the School Committee has a final draft. Mrs. Records wants to work on critical needs now. Mr. Durant would like to maximize the three year lease but wants the right plan. He suggested we put the lease on hold for a year. There is a concern that in 8 to 10 weeks we are talking about having a 3 to 5 year plan. Mr. Meyers stated that we are not going to build it from scratch. Mrs. Ellen Shanos, a parent, stated that a fundraiser was held to raise money for computers at Eldredge. She asked Mr. Nettik to make sure the money raised fits into the plan.

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East Greenwich Teacher of the Year-Maryann E. Crudale

Mr. Durant made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Records to approve recognizing Mrs. Crudale as East Greenwich Teacher of the Year. Mr. Meyers noted that Mrs. Crudale has been a teacher in East Greenwich for seven years. He stated that this was a very rigorous application process and Mrs. Crudale also had to write a philosophy. He added that she is warm and passionate about her work.

d. Procedure and Schedule for Selection of New Superintendent

The closing date for applications is May 1st. The current Superintendent will be on the Screening Committee. Mr. Durant asked how the process will work for interviewing applicants. Mr. Martin has concerns over the size of the committee and would like it broken up into two groups. He asked Mrs. Guliano to leave some opportunity for names of people who might be interested. He noted that he has gone through this process before and asked Mrs. Guliano if she has asked principals and department heads or just put people on the committee.

Mrs. Guliano responded that some people contacted her but she made proposed the list herself after checking with Mr. Meyers. She feels everyone on her list has the best interest of the community at heart. Mr. Durant feels the Chairperson should handle this. Mr. Durant suggested that this committee come back with no less than 2 candidates and no more than 4. Mrs. Judi Cavanaugh, teacher's union co-president, noted that no one is representing the middle school on the interview committee, and added that there are only two educators on the committee. Mrs. Guliano suggested that the School Committee make recommendations and come back at another meeting to revisit it. Mr. Martin feels it is important for the School Committee to find the right person. He would like less community involvement and more school involvement.

e. West Bay Community Health contract continuation

Mrs. Crawford stated that we do have an option in the next three years to stop contracting with

West Bay. She stated that our health insurance rates went up 4.25% this year and this is the highest she has seen. Mr. Cardello, our

health care consultant, feels we should not go out to bid at this time. Mrs. Crawford feels we should explore a wellness initiative program. Mr. Durant suggested we get Exeter/West Greenwich numbers. Mr. Durant made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Martin to approve the continuation of the West Bay Community Health contract. The motion passed unanimously.

f. Second Reading and Vote on Charge for Personnel Subcommittee

Mr. Durant made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Martin to table this item. The motion was unanimous.

VII. Financial Report

a. Budget FY 2010 Update

A work session meeting needs to be scheduled for Monday, April 20th to discuss the budget with the Finance Committee.

b. UCOA

Mr. Meyers stated that we did receive a general spreadsheet but no specifics. He will speak to Wendy Schmidle and send the Town a letter.

c. State Aid FY 2009 and FY 2010

Mr. Meyers provided material from the Department of Education.

IX. Discussion

a. What are we looking for in a new Superintendent? On a motion made by Mrs. Palumbo and seconded by Mr. Durant, the Committee voted unanimously to table this item.

X. School Committee Concerns

Mr. Martin feels that a School Committee member should only visit the schools when the principal is present.

XI. On a motion made by Mr. Durant and seconded by Mr. Martin the Committee, being polled individually, voted unanimously to adjourn and go into Executive Session at 9:50p.m. under R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a) (2) for a Teacher Contract Negotiations discussion with the Finance Committee.

Respectfully submitted,